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The Indwelling Christ

BY PETER AINSLIE

"Christ in you the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27.

THE great things that God does in the world are the things that he does in us. The physical world has its beauty with its landscapes, sunsets, starry skies, great waterfalls, lofty mountains, ocean expanse, blooming flowers; but none of these things compares with what God is attempting to do within us. These things yield to the demand of time, but God commands time to be his servant while he works within us at the most delicately constructed thing of his creation.

The world has always confused God with meteorology, seismology, and physics, and drawn conclusions which have no reasonable basis. One of the most striking instances is that of Elijah when he challenged the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and then slew them at the brook Kishon. Doubtless, disturbed by this altogether improper expression of his victory, it required only the threat of Jezebel to bring home to his soul the impropriety of his conduct. So he ran for his life. No one appeared to run in search of him, but he continued to run. For more than a month he wandered alone. The traditions of Mount Horeb had come down to him and naturally he sought for that sacred shrine where he might pour out his soul in self-examination and contrition. He hid himself in a cave of the mountain away from the gaze of the human eye and where self-justification and self-condemnation played upon the dial of his mind.

He was there alone with God and himself. A great wind came over the mountain, causing destruction in its path, but we are told that God was not in the wind; then after awhile an earthquake came, shaking

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the mountain, and we are likewise told that God was not in the earthquake; then a great forest fire swept by, licking up the tall grass and sweeping up the mountain side, and we are again reminded that God was not in the fire. God is never in a wind. That is the field for the meteorologist. He is never in an earthquake. That is the field for the seismologist. He is never in a fire. That is the field for the physicist.

God Not in Fire and Whirlwind

Nevertheless, it was a common belief that God is in fires, thefts, murders, winds, and diseases. The book of Job is a remarkably beautiful creation to prove the falsity of such a position. Colleges and universities would do well to put Job by the side of Hamlet in their curricula both for the beauty of its poetry and for its great lesson in refuting this common belief. People argued with Jesus that God's dwelling place was in these things rather than in oneself. To them the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices was a visitation of God's wrath, as was also the falling tower in Siloam, when it fell and killed eighteen persons. Jesus said that was not so. God is not in winds and earthquakes and fires and accidents and wars. But multitudes still believe that these are the robes with which God clothes himself. In our own day Christian people associated God with the world war. They distributed pictures of Jesus in the trenches with his benediction upon war. Nearly every church in Christendom believed that God was in the war. They talked about its moral aims and freely gave themselves for service and their priests and ministers for chaplains; whereas, God had no more to do with the world war than with the wind and the earthquake and the fire that swept across the mouth of the Horeb cave.

There is nothing finer in the life of Elijah than this experience at Horeb when he discovered that God is not in these things, but instead his dwelling place is in ourselves. There was a voice within Elijah that was struggling for release. Doubtless, while Elijah was fleeing from Jezebel the voice was saying, "Why are you running away? You know you are not the only one who believes in God. Why are you leaving the people?" Then when he reached Horeb, the voice grew louder, "Elijah, what are you doing here?" It was not the voice of Ahab or Jezebel, nor the crashing tread of storm and earthquake and fire that brought him to himself. There was a still small voice within him.

Personalities Must Meet

While it is generally recognized that God is with us in creating a spiritual and moral order of righteousness, it is with difficulty that we can grasp the concept of an indwelling spirit carrying us forward in a continuous creation. But that is really what is being done. Christ is not in the machinery of the churches. He is not in the organ. He is not in the atmosphere. He is not in the program. Christ is in us.

His indwelling is the transaction between personalities. The splendor of God is revealed to us in Christ. There could be no other method of approach to us than on the human basis because we are human beings. In order to teach us, the teacher must be on our ground. There have always been teachers in the world. In every nation they have heard of God. Sometimes these teachers have come from most unexpected sources. Sometimes they have been characters not altogether such as we would have chosen, but the mystery of the transmission of God's Spirit is a constant reminder that his Spirit is as limitless as light. It was no favoritism to the Jews that Jesus came from them. The Jews were most productive in spiritual insight. Out of their wealth of spiritual life and hope came Jesus. He was perfectly suited to the needs of the world.

We study him in the gospel records—those four remarkable witnesses which tell in simplest style of the earthly life of Jesus. We go back to those pages time after time. They tell the story of Jesus from eye witnesses. They have charmingly held us. But Paul's testimony establishes a new approach. He did not know Jesus in the flesh, yet he wrote more about Jesus than any other author in the New Testament. He knew Jesus only as we know him. He knew him in the Spirit. Some have thought the New Testament is a closed book. It might have been, if, in making it, it were confined exclusively to eye witnesses; but that is not true. Paul's contribution not only leaves open the door for others to continue this study in experimentation and creation; but he makes it obligatory upon us to find in Jesus what he found. He made his study in the light of the knowledge of his day; we must make our study in the light of the knowledge of our day.

God is Here

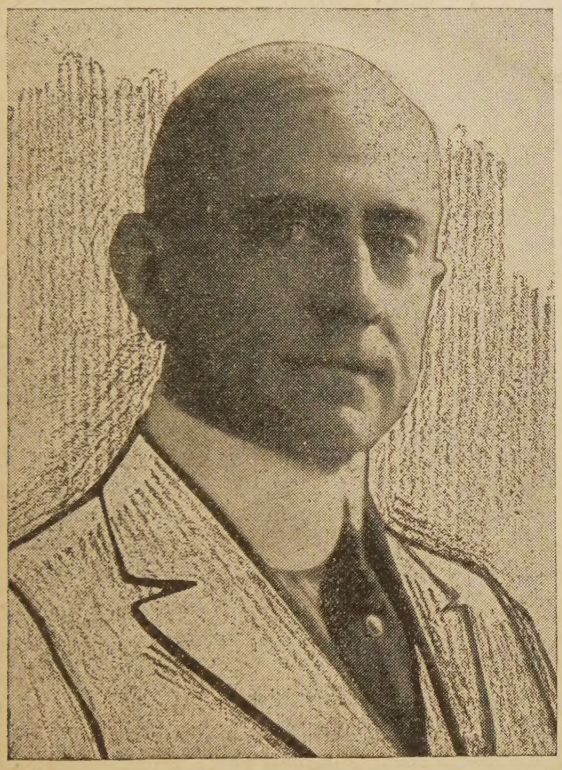
It is beautiful to say, "The heavens declare the glory of God." It is a fine line in poetry. But if we get no further than the poetic thought we have not gotten very far. The astronomer does not get very much out of talking about the stars declaring God's glory and I doubt very much if we get very far. Of course all that God has made declares his glory. But it is not what he made outside of us that satisfies us. In poetic fancy we can roam amid flower gardens, forest trees and starry skies; but we want more than the beauty of what God has put around us. We want God within us. The heart is not satisfied without him. We were made by him and for him and we are ill at ease without him.

We know God best through Christ. The things that he has made forever lie without us. Christ has shown us merely the borders of God's splendor and the symbols of his glory, which our understanding can only take hold of by his indwelling grace. The abstract and the unreal and the remote give way before the revelation of Jesus. God is personal, God is real, God is here. Our self-centered attitudes must be supplanted by God-centered attitudes, which respond to him with satisfaction and joy.

There is so much that we do not understand about

God. Our hungry hearts feed upon what we know and are still hungry to know more. Sometimes he appears so obscure that it is with difficulty we maintain our trust, especially when the burdens are heavy and help seems to be falling away. But these conditions are only passing clouds. Christ is in us. It is not nearly so important a question whether Christ is like God as whether God is like Christ. It is the Christlike God that makes us feel our identity with him. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is one of those sentences that quiver with new hope for us all, and marks the reality of the new era in spiritual experience.

It is not enough to read about Christ, whether we read his actual words or words about him by another.



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That is very good so far as it goes. We must take the time to know him. No one else can do this for us. There must be such intercourse, such transactions, such communion beyond the formal as will enable us to find a basis to say as Paul said, "I know him." To do this we must get away from those hard theological expressions. They may have served for their day, but they certainly do not serve for our day. He becomes understandable in the warm life of social relations. We no longer think of putting him into definitions or descriptive terms. He is in us. And we discover in ourselves a desire to express his spirit to another. It is not until then that the splendor of the revelation has been comprehended.

The coming and operation of his Spirit made a new epoch in religious experience. His Spirit is in us. His religion is the religion of the Spirit. It was well said by one of the Jewish prophets: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." There is a catholicity in the functions of the Spirit that lifts it far above race, creed and all attempts to monopolize spiritual things. The denominational yearbooks are disfigurative playthings in this field. Our calculations must always be from the basis that is within us, and that basis is never reliable unless it is "Christ in you the hope of glory." The basis is Christ's, the Spirit is Christ's and the fellowship is Christ's. Who can measure these?

Loneliness Without Indwelling Christ

Christ is no foreigner to us. The life of God and our life are so closely akin that Christ is congenial to us. There is a peace we possess when we are conscious of his abiding and there is a loneliness within us when we feel ourselves apart from him. It is the indwelling Christ that carries our dreams and longings to their ultimate conclusions and arouses our values to their highest possibilities. This stimulation must be for something. It must never be regarded as an end. It must be forever beginning to be. Under the control of Christ the whole of oneself starts to work. We move to the stimulus of the Spirit. It is not a call from without; it is a call from within. It is a companionship expressing itself in a cooperative task.

It is the consciousness of the incomplete that moves us to call for Christ to take up his habitation within us. In his indwelling we see more clearly than ever our incomplete selves and the values within us that he has appraised by standards far beyond earthly calculations. Each person becomes a world—inter-individualistic, which individualizes us into personality, sharing in world affairs, small or large, but expressing our assent or dissent, developing personality by gradual growth. "Christ in us the hope of glory" is a radiant picture of our reality. It gives a new respect for ourselves and a new reverence for other personalities.

This is the basis of our hope, which sometimes goes into eclipse, covering us with gloom and discouragement. An earnest inquirer asked, "If there is reality in prayer tell me how I can find it." No one wants the unreal, but it is the unreal that haunts us every day. Nevertheless, Christ is daily sharing himself with us. Take up any of his experiences for study and we find ourselves eager to adventure into the same field. We may fall, but we rise to try again. Perhaps it is love that breaks down, or purity that is strained, or honesty that looks as though it has gone into the shadow, or truth suffers. It is not what Christ would have; neither is it what we want; but we find ourselves entangled and the development has stopped.

"Go, Sin No More"

It looks discouraging. A man came into my office and told me his story. He closed by saying, "I have tried and tried, and I don't think I will try again." I came back at him quickly, "But the very fact that you have come here to talk it over is proof that there is One within you helping you to try again, and you are going to try again." And he did and that time he won out. It is in the rough-and-tumble of life that

Christ comes. To the woman who had sinned and was about to sin again, he said, "Go, sin no more."

Forms and ceremonies have their place, but they must not be depended on for fellowship with Christ, lest the form become the fellowship and Christ be left out. He is in us. Nothing can be substituted for the living Christ. It is no wonder that Paul saw such glory in his resurrection and fastened to his glory the glory that awaits us. All other peculiarities of Christianity lose their distinctions in the presence of this one fact—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

Christ lives in us amid our motives and attitudes and thoughts—sometimes not a very comfortable place for him or for us to live, but it is his living here that will correct our wrong motives and improper attitudes and regulate our thoughts. This is the creating power of Christ in us. He takes us where we are and we follow him to where we ought to be. Maturity is a relative term. We can only become mature for this period of life in the flesh. However mature we may have become by the end of our earthly pilgrimage, we are still incomplete and we pass for completion into another epoch of life. Christ has given us the way, he has given us the Spirit, he has given us himself. Out of this indwelling has grown a companionship "which neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Because He Is God

By Merton S. Rice

Though he slay me, yet will I trust him. Job 13:15.

THE supreme reason I have for trusting God is—God. My religion is not founded upon my ability to understand God, nor upon my ability to lay down what I shall recognize as a logical course for his procedure. I trust him because he is God. I am sure the prompting reason for the large portion of the religious inquiries I receive lies in the difficult endeavor of people to find out some logical explanation for things which are troubling them; things which to them, in their small worlds, cannot be made to vindicate their ideas of what for them can be good. I have just had in one mail three letters, all carrying the same threat of surrendering belief in God, unless something could be shown which would clear up the mystery of those individual hardships. One letter said: "My faith is slipping because I am suffering from disappointment." Another letter, from a person facing similar difficulties, said: "My whole plan of life seems thwarted. I have set myself to do a certain thing, and if I am not privileged to fulfill that great desire of my heart, I shall give up my faith in God." The writer of the third letter said: "There is so little friendship available in this cold world, and no sympathy, so far as I am able to discover, and I am therefore ready to throw out of my mind the whole idea of God."

How Do We Trust God?

I pushed my mail back on my desk and said: What kind of a hold on God have folks, anyhow? What do we mean when we say we trust God? Do I trust God? Did any of those inquirers, who seemed to think they could just toss the fact out of their minds at their own free will—did any of them really have trust in God, or were they merely using a patronizing attitude toward some great something whose value and usefulness was to be measured wholly by its personal reward? I picked up my Bible and turned straight to the book of Job, to read again the story as best told, thus far in all the human endeavor to tell it, of the struggles which life's difficulties can bring. I was brought squarely up to the familiar text I have chosen, the unavoidable conclusion which a great man of God arrived at, who kept faith as faith, as he struggled with an ideal while stumbling along a supremely difficult way of suffering. "I will trust him, though he slay me!" It sounds like tragedy, and if it proves to be tragedy we will discover that it is the tragedy of faith. It is positive. It has no surrender in it. There is no suggestion of some alternative. It is trust straight through, without concern as to what the end might be. It is God's part to be God. It is my part to trust him because he *is* God, and I shall refuse to surrender my trust in him because of something which happens to me. I trust God not because of me, but because of him.

I like this man Job. His compelling experience has thrilled the world's heart. Whenever I am tempted to draw a conclusion within too small a horizon, I turn and read this text. It is the true epitome of a very great man. I would rather have left this verse ringing in the hearts of mankind, than any other verse that has come from a human pen. I have said many times, and the longer I preach the more my long-formed desire is confirmed, that if I were privileged to leave one message of ministry to the world, I would without hesitation make it an exhortation to trust God.

The Ever-Present Problem

Every thoughtful mind has tried itself at some time with the badly tangled problem of human suffering. A woman recently came to me at the close of a sermon and inquired, "Can you tell me of some book which deals with the problem of suffering? I have a dear friend who I fear is about to lose faith in God because of a very great sorrow that has fallen across her life." I tried to tell her how much the subject had been made the wrestling place of reason and faith. There was nothing at all peculiar about the position of her friend. After naming several books that carried the arguments, I said, "The book of Job is about the first and the last we have." It is not merely the registration of a man's mental exercises upon the theme. It is more

like a carefully kept diary of a man who was very busy living out a most heroic answer to the question. Fighting his hard way through. Feeling the sting of pain. Bracing himself against severe loss. Enduring hardship in about every form. Absorbing mockery. Resisting tempting suggestions to quit. This book of Job is the well kept log of a life of dauntless faith. It is not difficult to frame a philosophy about well chosen syllogisms, and force it to the determined conclusion, if we can but shut tight our study door and hear nothing about actual life outside, and see nothing of its tragic contradictions. Poetry and songs can be

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well framed under a spell of unhindered imagination. But when philosopher and poet lay down their skillful pens and walk out of the cloistered study to face the life that actually goes its stumbling way, then the dream of seclusion must be tested by the street.

I sat, one dreadfully long night, beside one of my dearest friends, from whose hands a fortune of accumulating years of a great business was swept away in the swift turn of our peculiarly constituted modern markets. I saw the lawyers and the bankers come and go all that long dark night. I read with my friend the arriving telegrams. I saw him when morning came, the rich man of yesterday, the man—just the man, but all the man—of today. I learned more, that impressive and never to be forgotten night, about how a real man can live in the crumbling presence of business disaster and property loss, than I might be able to learn out of all the books of a hundred years. When a man stands, with everything he had come to call his own taken from him, he is a study in conduct, and a test of the reality of any trust he may theretofore have professed. Poetry, and philosophy, and imagination, and logic—all become the flesh of facts. One sad day as I was trying to find some words to convey some comfort to a woman who had lost her only son by a terrible accident, she turned suddenly to me and said searchingly, through her tears and sobs, "Have you ever lost a son?" Theory and philosophy become by experience the flesh of facts, and then they stand stark and bare.

The Things That Are Far

There are many things in life, we must admit, which impress us strangely, not because they are particularly great, but because they happen to be near. The views of things yet in the future affect us but faintly, not because they are not important, but because they are far distant. Job was at work beyond his own horizon. Every man is, though it be hard for him to be heroic enough to recognize it. My life seems so very much my own life that I have a hard time interpreting it in the interlocked meaning of ministry; nevertheless, my life is a sacred trust that is inter-related.

Suppose I do die! What of that, anyhow? I am too easily prone to estimate that as a supreme matter in issue, and to talk in cheap terms about it, as is suggested, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." I cannot, however, talk in such cheap estimate when I reckon my death in terms outside my own personality. I may be dying for the interest of others.

Who was Job, anyhow, that either life or death, today or tomorrow, should make any particular difference to the world? Who am I, that my little hurt, or pain, or loss, should be lugged up to the bar of providence as a matter for judgment? I have a letter which came to my desk just as I came in preparation to this very point in this sermon. It came from a distant city, from a pastor of a church whose work and influence were being threatened because a man in that church, who had influential place in the community, was being compelled to pass through some dark experiences he could not understand, and against which he protested, and because of which he had declared he was tempted to let go of his faith and give up. I give you these immediate illustrations of matters that are constant in their occurrence, that I may find figures with which to say to you that from Job until this very minute, there is more than any one man in any one man's life.

True as is that fact, it remains one of the very hardest things for all of us to grasp. It cannot be left out of life if correct balance is to be maintained. Simplest experiences will trip you if you attempt your way in the false perspective that you are the only one concerned in the outcome of your life. Take that easily overdrawn estimate of your personal happiness. This moment it is being flown as the banner of a low recruiting idea of indulgence. Flown there as though it were a high ideal, and worthy to recruit followers who would be bold to march across this difficult day of ours, and set their own personal indulgence of a degrading appetite against everything the destruction

of strong drink has meant to a long-suffering world. That is today's logical place in the maintenance of a selfish philosophy that would forget others in the overdrawn importance of self. You cannot judge your life by yourself.

Truth Here Writ Large

Truth is here writ large in the case of Job. Every one of us is set to write a life message. Most of us, to be sure, live such tiny lives that it is difficult to make out the characters with which we write. A man gave me a small bit of a bobbit type. On the tiny square end of it, less than a quarter of an inch square, is set the full text of the Lord's Prayer. It is of no service to me. I only know what the man who gave it to me said it held. Most of us are making individually such tiny editions of life, it is quite true, we cannot be easily made out. It is but occasionally across the ages that we behold characters, who arise to strike the great facts into such proportions that a whole race can read them.

Job is the impressive figure of a man who proposes to stand anyhow, because he is convinced that God is his trust. There is a desperation in his confidence that courts tragedy itself rather than waver. He does not seem to understand his trouble, but that cannot alter his faith. That is a great fact for us to practice in life. We understand trouble very little. The heroic thing for us to do is to be able to surmount such a fact. What we may be led to call light or dark may be of the least significance. One very dark night I put out all the stars in the heavens of God above me, by kindling a little fire beside my little tent in the woods. I was seated so close to my little smudge that I could see nothing else. It was, however, no argument for me to bring for the brilliance of my fire. It was, rather, a sure comment that I sat too near its little gleam. The old Indian across the lake saw my fire as a mere spark caught in the bush. Our close held experiences must be honestly read in the farflung perspective of relationship. Many so-called faiths have been shattered and surrendered upon such very small reasons. Men and women for trivial reasons profess to give up faith in God. Personal slights, personal misfortunes—many other matters wholly irrelevant to real faith—are today brought as reasons for surrendering it.

The Bound for Faith

I point to Job, as one who walked squarely even unto desperation, as the only bound he recognized for faith. If you cannot trust God, even slain and broken by that very trust itself, you cannot trust God at all. Faith in God does not stand in your soul because you can always keep it stayed up by understanding. Faith in God will stand in your life just because it is faith in God. It will lock arms with Job and declare always, "Yes, it even looks like death from here; but I had rather die with him and for him, and even by him, than to go on living a bit longer feeling all the remaining way I had deserted him. Death! What is death, anyhow, but an incident along my way?"

I propose now to name two derivative facts which I am persuaded are essentials to the condition of a real trust in God.

I trust him primarily because he is God. Faith in God will come, and not infrequently, to places where there will be absolutely no discoverable reason for it, but just faith. It will become necessary for us to know that God is God's reason. Why should I, a little man, fancy I have bolstered up God because I have brought out some little defense and proof that makes him seem more logical? God is God's best reason. The wreckage that has been strewn along the way where mankind has been struggling religiously, has always been made when men have forgotten that the prime reason in communion with God is God himself. Serious misrepresentations of what faith could be have been made when what has been termed religion has been belittled into telling fortunes, or winning battles, or healing mortal pains. We have written faith in God in too cheap terms.

Because He Is God!

Here is religious experience. Trouble is met. Faith counsels with reason. The springs of knowledge are sought. There is a daring, however, that will proceed. One omnipotent is on the throne. He is a Father of infinite mercy. Somehow I am in his keeping.

To him, most certainly, will be given high name by our age, who, with the Bible in one hand, and science in the other, shall be able to bring about an evident agreement of faith and fact. Here in this ancient book of Job, in one staring determined dash after another, this great tireless man of faith is attempting that thing. Beneath every puzzling condition he looks carefully for a reason. Beyond every disaster he looks for some divine end. *Because it is God,* is the tread of his determined faith.

God help me to stand, too! There is Job! His body torn and tortured! His friends urging him to let go, curse God and die! His wife even given over to despair, and pleading for it. Lone, tired, tried, broken by suffering and stripped by losses, he still pushes them all back, and stands them all there in defeated phalanx, while he declares, in personal triumph, for mankind to treasure forever: "I will trust him though he slay me." There do come times in all our lives when only desperation will preserve our position.

Final Triumph Sure

My second resultant observation is the conclusion, which is secure, that *though the seeming results of our faith may sometimes bring sad experiences, they nevertheless bring us final triumph.* In the estimate of human life, final results are the only things that matter, after all. There is no reason to doubt that God could have done a great deal more for all of us than has been done; he could doubtless have saved us many unnecessary steps and struggles, had we but had faith enough to stand strongly enough to get his

victory. My father used to sing a simple little song so much that it became a veritable part of the atmosphere of our home. It is a child's song, but I learned it from my father, and lived to hear him sing it unceasingly into his old age, and he sang it up to his calm death:

Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.

I presume, because that song has been set so indelibly into my home remembrance all my days, and the child's edition of it had come straight on into the triumphantly matured experience of my father, therefore it sounds to me in its simplicity like a ripened faith. Simply because I cannot drop the plummet of my understanding down to the last depths of things I may be enduring today—I will not let that be a reason to cause me to doubt God's ways. Whenever I become fearful of the visions which rise before me like specters out of the dark, I settle myself back upon that simple yet fundamental fact, "Jesus loves me, this I know."

Hold fast that fact, my friend, because *he is God.* There will come times when you cannot see your way. Such times may seem to many to be oppressively common. The truth of this unqualified fact cannot change. When at last you shall make that final earthly stumble, and go toppling into your mortal grave, you will find there that all the light that has been given has fallen upon an ever ascending path that leads from earth out beyond the stars, and the great Son of God, Jesus Christ, will stoop down and bear you up forever and forever.

Self-Surrender Necessary

May I not now urge upon you the acceptance of the practice of this great experience. If you are in the darkness now, the only way out is to surrender your will to the will and life of God in Christ. I covet the unfaltering practice of such a trust as this as the richest possession for life here and now. We may be always sure that in the deepest darkness God may be found.

Everything inferior is a higher in the making;
Everything hateful is a coming beautiful;
Everything evil is a coming good.

This moment, to any of you who may doubt God, there is available the very deliverance you crave. Out of the night, from whose stygian shadows our great text comes as it has come across long centuries like an eternal trumpet set at the lips of conclusive experience, this triumphant truster, Job, hails and greets us with his quenchless cheer. Thank God!

I see my way, as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive! What time, what circuit first,
I ask not! But unless God sends his hail,
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, his good time, I shall arrive!
He guides me, and the bird.

Because He is God, I will trust him.

Poise in the Face of Panic

By C. Wallace Petty

And he answered him never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Matthew 27:14.

THE PICTURE of the Galilean Carpenter on trial for his life before the Roman governor presents those profound contrasts in human values that capture the imagination of men. The attitudes and aims that have waged mighty conflict across the whole history of civilization stood face to face that day, incarnated by a peasant and a prince. Behind the governor was Rome, the tradition of imperial conquest and victorious force, the pomp and prestige of powerful paganism, the kingdom of this world at its zenith. Behind the Carpenter was Palestine, the tradition of mysticism and prophecy, the poise and power of spiritual achievement, with the kingdom not of this world, its vision splendid. That judgment hall epitomized an endless struggle which has never lost its interest for Christendom during the change and drift of the long centuries.

Between the two actors in this drama, the intriguing personality is the Carpenter. He gives a golden tinge of romance to a picture that is otherwise all tragedy. He is one man against an empire; a lone champion of the ideal confronting a hopeless debacle of his daring dreams. As a heretic and blasphemer he has already been condemned by the ecclesiastics. Charged with insurrection against Cæsar, he awaits the verdict of doom from the Roman judge. The background is defeat; the foreground silhouettes a crown; around the corner is death. He is through at thirty-three.

But in such a dilemma it is the governor, not the Galilean, who is confused. The panic is on the seat of judgment, not in the dock. The testimony runs in on a tide of lies. The animus and hatred in it are so crude and obvious as to startle even a Roman. There is no rebuttal. Facing the accusations with head up, serene in the face of the attack, calm as if walking the fields of Galilee among the lilies that he loved, the prisoner is silent. It is not the silence of insolence. The calm is not bravado. The courage has no suspicion of swagger. It is no flight from reality here; no wishful thinking building a stairway of illusion that would bridge disaster; no defense mechanism of superiority covering a haunting sense of dread. It is poise—the silence, calm, and courage of a great soul who had negated the fallacious fears that stampede and paralyze the minds of lesser men. "He answered him never a word insomuch that the governor marveled greatly."

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Jesus had negated in his own thinking the fear that error would, in the long last, emerge victor over truth. Pilate's judgment hall on the day of the trial echoed

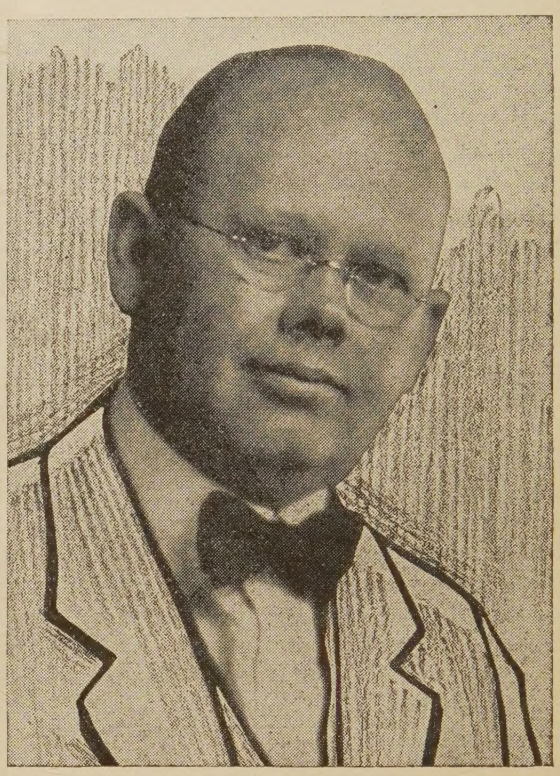
with perjury and lies. Falsehood stalked the corridors of justice, unabashed and unafraid. Truth made no defense. Jesus knew that nothing he could say would change the immediate verdict; he knew that nothing Pilate could say would change the ultimate result. Having lived his testimony to the truth, without a word he left the issue with the God behind the processes of history. We believe the centuries have vindicated him.

To our panic stricken religious age, such poise illuminates a real message. The modifications in the structure and statement of faith necessitated by new knowledge at times seem to place religion in a desperate situation. The humanist draws the issue on the very objective reality of God himself. The psychologist attempts to explain our profoundest convictions away as wishful thinking and compensation for humanity's sense of inferiority. The behaviorist scorns the idea of a spiritual, inner life. The physicist and the chemist proclaim man a dance of electrons and an arena of chemical reactions. And while most of us do not know enough about the findings of the specialists to pass judgment for ourselves, nevertheless there exists the haunting fear that perhaps in all that is called the new knowledge, there is a dynamite that may at any time blast the foundations from under the sermon on the mount or annihilate from history the hill called Calvary.

There is no doubt that our religious thinking has to be done today against the background of modern knowledge. There has been discovered no intelligent way for a sane man to compartmentalize his mind and assign his religion to a mental area furnished with the intellectual trappings of the sixteenth century, while housing his practical thinking in twentieth century accommodations. Christianity must be contemporary or it will be devitalized. It must bring redemption to the world as it is, not as it was. Its victory will be won for our generation in a world with a scientific mind-set—or there will be no victory. All of which is painfully obvious.

It is just as patent that the differences existing between the mind of our age and the mind of Christ cannot be resolved by any makeshift compromises. It is easy to declare that no conflict exists between the new knowledge and the old faith, but such a statement gets nowhere, because it is not true. Pat little reconciliations in such a big issue are generally too simple and always too optimistic. That faith and knowledge will both be modified in any intelligent creed that will emerge from the present flux in our thinking; that honest constructive work on the problems at hand is the only way to spiritual peace; that the next generation will probably face the task of further modification and reconstruction—all of this it is well to confess.

But when all conditions have been faced and all the difficulties of our difficult day confessed, the cause of the nervous concern for religion that characterizes so much of our preaching and literature is hard to explain. What all godly men want is the victory of the truth. Each generation has its testimony to offer as to spiritual experience; it has its convictions not to defend but to proclaim. It has its ideals to live and its fruits to produce. But the fear of new truth from any quarter is in the last analysis a fear, conscious or unconscious, that after all our spiritual experiences are not valid and our faith not well founded. It is a subtle form of infidelity.



C. Wallace Petty

Our religion must vindicate itself not in the cloister nor in the laboratory, but in life. Nothing that is discovered in a test tube or found in a crucible is going to discredit the truth that is in our hopes. The sooner we abandon what is not true, the better. As religious men we have no passion to be duped. And by the same token, what is not true in modern knowledge will spend itself and in the long quest for reality be sloughed off. It is not to be hoped that our theologians will speak immediately any reconciling word that will entirely change the present situation. It is impossible for any apostle of contemporary knowledge to speak any destructive word that will affect the ultimate verdict of experience. Truth has a way of emerging victor, and God is Truth. We can live our testimony with poise and peace and leave the outcome to history.

II

Jesus had negated in his thinking the fear that, in the long last, matter can emerge victor over spirit. What a picture of materialistic power Pilate presented! Over his shoulders Rome had draped her purple. Through his eyes the Cæsar looked out on Palestine. He incarnated for the vassaled province the resources, the purposes and the force of the greatest pagan empire the world has known; the apotheosis of matter.

And the Carpenter, alone, deserted by his intimates, betrayed by a trusted friend, repudiated by his countrymen—what a contrast! A mere episode in one of the religious conflicts of Judaism seemed about to be brought to merited conclusion. No wonder Anatole France pictured the aged Pilate as failing to remember the name of the Jewish rabbi he crucified. Love, brotherhood, spiritual kingdoms, Father God—what chance had one with no other defense in the presence of Rome! But we know the verdict of history. The only reason Pilate is remembered is that he failed in a great spiritual crisis. Jesus trusted the victorious values.

The apparent inequality in the age-old struggle between the material and the spiritual, the pagan and the Christian, Mammon and God, is accentuated in the highly mechanized, technological age in which we live. It is always difficult for either a powerful prosperous Pilate or a powerful prosperous American to prefer spiritual values to valuable securities. Values seem so vague and elusive—securities seem so sound and safe. The shoulders of Mammon so easily catch the purple, and the forehead of values seems so often garlanded with thorns. And in the matter of purple and thorns humanity has a natural preference. It is little wonder that prophetic voices today are asking, "What will prosperity and its paganism do to the soul of America?"

Like an insidious poison this paganism works among us. It creates greed and greed breeds war. "Grab" and "get" it dignifies as business techniques. Production and profits outrank personality in its category of worth. The sanctities of personal and home life it labels as "repressions" whose only validity is in outworn custom. It confuses comfort with culture and security with salvation. It wears the cross as a trinket but refuses to bear it as a part of life's contribution to the redemption of the race. It has a way of calling license liberty and self-exploitation self-expression. Discipline it damns as a Victorian mistake and, under the name of realism parades its vulgarities in the open. It is the poison of Pilate.

Yes, to trust the victory of the spiritual is difficult for men who live where Mammon maintains its royal court. It is difficult to enlist folk in a crusade to take the Promised Land when they think they are already there. A generation that rides on a four lane cement highway will find it hard to see the logic of the strait and narrow road. Praying for daily bread seems superfluous to people who insist on a course dinner diet. True, there are thousands of men and women who keep their faith firm and their souls clean in the midst of Mammon's miasma. But the age-old struggle between matter and spirit is nevertheless the most dangerous factor in the present religious scene.

Will the spiritual values of Jesus prevail? The pessimists answer with a unanimous No. Spengler sweeps our senile civilization into the scrap heap. Dean Inge dismisses the struggle with an epigram: "Around the gate that leads to the strait and narrow way there will never be a crowd." And in between Spengler and Inge a thousand less important voices presage the coming of doom.

But even now it seems upon careful review that men are tiring of their gilded, pagan toys. Futility settles over the young intellectuals in the form of awful boredom. Frustration haunts the pages of smart literature. The Midas touch fails just where success is imperative if we are to be happy. Satiety proves more bitter than want, for it adds to disappointment both disillusionment and disenchantment. Says Mr. Lippmann, "Among those who no longer believe in the religion of their fathers . . . there is an increasing number who feel there is a vacancy in their lives." Vacancy—victims of vacuity! Something has slipped out of the joy and tang of living, something without which, in spite of all else that is ours, we cannot help feeling we are being cheated. Is it not an hour when, without thinking of the Man who spoke the words, men are profoundly reflecting upon the question, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his life?" We have nearly gained the world, but what has happened to life?

Whether this picture be over-optimistic or not, one fact remains: the struggle is on between Pilate and Jesus, Mammon and religion, paganism and Christianity. We have our lives to live, our ideals to serve, our faith in the spirit to proclaim. Panic is no part of our program. We can take the risk with Jesus and face the issue with his poise.

III

Jesus had negated in his thinking the fear that death emerges victor over life. Nothing seems to have stirred Pilate's wonder so much as that Jesus was not afraid to die. The Roman was afraid of the shadows. The long dark was a dismal threat that no man with Pilate's philosophy would contemplate with indifference. To him death was the end, dissolution, defeat. But the Herald of Eternal Life had no such fear. What he was could not die in God's world of values. Good Friday would be but a minor strain that served as a prelude to Easter hosannas. So he answered the governor never a word when the governor pronounced the verdict of death.

Mature men, if they are to live with poise, must make terms with the experience of death. Not that the fear of the dark is a cause for cowardice. We are learning that death is as natural as birth, one the end as the other the beginning of the mortal span. With Goethe most folk would say that no sane man wants to go rambling off into eternity. But the physical fear of mortality does not make us cravens. We have outgrown the superstitions that clustered so long about the grave.

It is not the fear of extinction, but it is the dread of futility that makes a problem out of death. Nothing daunts the human spirit so long as life has significance. Calvarys are rational if they are redemptive, but if the things men die for are after all only fantasy, illusion, dreams that can never come true, then Calvarys are the colossal waste spots of history. Cal-

varys are rational if Easter is true. When Bertrand Russell imagines himself by the side of his own grave and affirms, "Then I shall rot," one cannot help but feel that all the struggle and the sacrifice he urges in his Free Man's Worship is a fool's philosophy that ends in frustration. When a modern novelist asserts that "man is only a bundle of cellular matter upon its way to become manure," the world of ideals seems suddenly to become the ruse of a chaos rather than the values of a cosmos. Sanity goes out of the process of history when it is pictured as an unending, insignificant parade of loving, yearning, aspiring humans that ends in a cemetery. "Ye are the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what ye shall be," wrote the Apostle John; and somehow life becomes worth living when those words undergird one's faith. Jesus had negated in his thinking the fear that he could die.

Some assumptions a man of faith must make. Those assumptions do not clear up all doubts or answer all questions. But when such assumptions give expression to the highest we know, surely, we can bring to them the best we have and "bet our lives" that they are true. Error will not prevail over truth! Matter will not win over spirit! Death cannot be victor over life! These factors were in the faith of Jesus, and on the first Easter were vindicated when he wrestled with death in a garden and came from the struggle with the keys to the tomb dangling at his girdle.

Reconciliation

By Joseph Fort Newton

Be ye reconciled to God. II Corinthians 5:20.

SOME WORDS seem large enough to hold all our thoughts, all that we have felt and hoped and dreamed about life. Of such a word Keats said in one of his finest lines, it is like a bell that gives a tongue to time and a voice to eternity, revealing God. Thus, when we would utter our deepest thought about life and what it means, about God and what he is, there is one word that leaps to our lips—love. It is like a magic chalice into which we pour all that we have learned here, all that we hope for hereafter; like a seashell in which we hear the voices of many waters that drift and sing. Another such word is the Amen that follows after prayer, the mighty answer of the heart to the will of God, the ineffable homeward sigh of the soul, breathing out the unutterable longings no tongue can tell.

Just so St. Paul, in the great passage from which the text is taken, sums up the secret of religion, the heart of it, the height and depth of it, in one word—Reconciliation. It is the whole of theology in one revealing word, as a noble thinker, now gone to his reward, has recently shown us, leaving his exposition of it as a legacy to the church. The mighty yearning of God, the deep need of man, the life and death of Jesus, the redeeming ministry of the church, the prophetic meaning of song, sacrament and symbol—all find focus in this profound, far-reaching word. The power of God is in it, his passion, his purpose, and the prophecy of the final harmony of all souls in his fellowship. Such a word has in it a thousand sermons, too many to be preached in a lifetime; and so we can deal with only one facet of it.

God Not to Be Reconciled

First of all, let us put out of our minds forever the idea that it is God who is angry and alienated, and who needs to be reconciled to man, as if he could not forgive until he had been placated and appeased. Such a suggestion should have died in the first breath that uttered it. Not so St. Paul, who tells us that God is revealing himself in Christ, and beseeching us to be reconciled to him. God is love, and love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, seeketh to reconcile and to redeem; and love never faileth. The vision of God in Christ makes the dark theology of olden time not only obsolete, but intolerable. Nor is it the primary turning of the soul to God in repentance and forgiveness that St. Paul has in mind. Wonderful is that first awakening of the soul, more wonderful than the discovery of a new star out on the edge of the sky; but the apostle is thinking of something more difficult to attain.

Consider to whom these words were written, and it will be plain that they "speak to our condition," as George Fox would say, bringing the whole problem and process of life before us. They were not addressed to wicked men walking in evil ways, forgetful or defiant of God, but "to the church of God which is in Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." The apostle is writing to men and women who had confessed their sins, had accepted Christ as their Lord and Leader, and who were trying to follow him—imperfectly, no doubt, but faithfully; and it is to such as these that he says: "Be ye reconciled to God." Clearly it is one thing to accept God in Christ, and another thing to reconcile ourselves to the mysterious and awful order of the world. What we call conversion is only the beginning, only the alphabet, so to speak, of a school of discipline in which we learn to spell out here a word and there a line of a book of hieroglyphics. Beyond the first joy of the surrender of the soul to God lies the long, hard way of the trial and perfecting of our faith, and what this means we know when we open the Catechism of Facts.

Let each one ask himself the question, Am I yet fully reconciled to God? At times we are. There are hours of insight, moments of vision when we can see afar, mounts of transfiguration where the rivers seem like threadlets of silver in the valley. But there is a coming down again, and at the foot of the mount we hear the cry of pain and the turbid ebb and flow of human misery, to say nothing of the terror that darkens the world today. If we have moods of lucid joy, there are also days of peevishness, of restless self-regard, of actual atheism, of bitter distrust or cold suspicion of

the worth of life. Which one of us can say that he is reconciled to God in the way in which he is managing our life? When that disappointment fell upon us, crushing our hopes, how was it? When God came into the sick chamber in our home, and said to us, Make this a school-room, make your suffering a sacrifice of praises, were we reconciled? Who can say that he is reconciled to God? No man must lecture another upon this topic; let each search his own heart.

Accepting the Universe

It was the habit of sweet Margaret Fuller to exclaim in her eager, happy, heroic manner, "I accept the universe." When this was told to Carlyle, the old man remarked sardonically, "Gad! she'd better!" William James, who tells the story, makes use of it to emphasize the fact that at bottom the whole concern of morality and religion is with the manner of our acceptance of the universe. And he goes on to ask these questions, to which those who knew him are not in doubt as to what answers he himself would give: "Do we accept it only in part and grudgingly, or heartily and altogether? Shall our protests against certain things in it be real, radical and unforgiving, or shall we think that, even with evil, there are ways of living that must lead to good? If we accept the whole, shall we do so as if stunned into submission, as Carlyle would have us—or shall we do so with enthusiastic assent?" Three ways, three attitudes are open to us, and the joy of life depends on which we take—Rebellion, Resignation, and Reconciliation.

Perhaps we do not realize that all round about us innumerable lives are lived out in sullen bitterness, in daily, hourly refusal to "accept the universe." For multitudes of our race life is irking, vexing, maddening, and it would surprise us to know how many deem it a farce, a foolishness, or at best a rather stupid jest. The very conditions of existence, its limitations, its hardships, its handicaps, its senseless triviality, fret them, at times, to fury. Macaulay applied to Byron the fable with which the Duchess of Orleans used to illustrate the character of her son. All the fairies, save one, were bidden to his birth, each bringing a gift, until he seemed dowered with all the treasures of genius and fame. But the uninvited elf came last and so mixed with the profuse offerings of her sisters her

A Pastoral Prayer

By Frank Halliday Ferris, *South Park Church, Newark, N. J.*

WE DO NOT COME praying for things, but praying only for Thee. So often we ask for all things else, and forget to ask for Thee. So often we thank Thee for the things with which Thou hast blessed us, and fail to thank Thee for the supreme gift of Thyself. What were our lives without Thee—poor, weak, timid, tempest-tossed creatures that we are, here today, tomorrow gone, knowing not what a day may bring forth? But if Thou art our Light and our Salvation, of whom shall we be afraid? If Thou art our Refuge and Strength, we will not fear though the earth change and the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas. It is not so much what Thou hast done for us, wondrous as is thy continuing provision for our wants, as what Thou hast been to us, aye, what Thou art to us now: the Fountain of living water, springing up in us unto eternal life, whereof one drinks to thirst no more; the eternal Light in whom is no darkness at all, the Light of the World, the Light that lighteth every man coming into the world; the eternal Lover of our souls who will not let us go; the Good Shepherd who gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom and gently leads those that have their young; the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother; the Homeland from which we come, to which at the last we return; the infinite and eternal Creator Spirit from whom our spirits proceed, to whom our spirits are akin; the eternal Father who carest for every child of his as a mother cares for the son of her womb.

There are many terrors that affright us, but when we think of Thee they vanish as mist before the sun. There are sins that have put us to shame so many times we feel utterly crushed, but when we think of Thee, we know that thy grace is sufficient for us, that Thou canst enable us to conquer all our sins, to defeat them every one. When we think how blotted, stained and torn are the pages of our book of life, we wonder how we can ever be forgiven the sins and follies which we can not forgive in ourselves. Then we come to a cross with a man's broken body upon it, and we see the measure of thy love. All of us know the heartache, the heartbreak, the sleepless night, the pillow wet with tears. We do not always understand the reason why. But when we see Thee in the light that streams from Calvary, we know that Thou sharest our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear, and we believe we shall understand when the day breaks and the shadows flee. All of us know the sense of loneliness that comes when in our deepest experiences we must leave our friends behind and tread the winepress alone. But when we think of Thee we can say with Jesus, "I am alone, and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me."

> Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,
> When the bird waketh and the shadows flee,
> Fairer than morning, lovelier than the daylight,
> Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.

We do not name before Thee now the gifts we receive from thy bounteous hand. We name and thank Thee for Thyself. We do not come praying for things, we come praying only for Thee. Come to us. Abide with us. For Christ's sake, Amen.

malignant gift that every blessing became a curse. Hence a man with the genius of an angel, but awry with himself, angry with life, and railing against fate. Byron was not only a glorious singer, but the wisest of sages. Restless, resentful, "impatient of the intolerable patience of God," he blew the silver bugle of revolt against everything, and our hearts applauded. Nearly all of us have passed through such a period. Like his own Lucifer, we shook our fists in the face of Fate defiantly. When pain nags, when sorrow stabs, when hopes fade and plans go awry, that mood is apt to recur even today, filling us with the old rage or a new cynicism. Such is the way of Rebellion, and it does not end in "the worm, the canker, and the grief," as it did with Byron; its fruit is futility and folly.

Learning Resignation

Someone said that the sum of the religion of Carlyle is "Close your Byron, open your Goethe"; that is, lay down the flag of revolt and learn a large, serene, wise Resignation. It is sane advice, and here the wise ones of olden time, and especially the Stoics, have much to teach us. Lucretius, Virgil, Aurelius testify to the deep peace that comes to those who bow to the inevitable, not bitterly, but in benign submission. They found that the way of wisdom is not to resist nature, not to triumph over it, much less to pervert it, but to realize our original unity with it. They learned that, after all, the external is nothing, and the inner life is all. Stern, strong, austere, they accepted the universe, and they attained to something akin to saintliness, or at least to a bright, gem-like beauty of spirit which we see in the lonely, lovely soul of Aurelius, in whom courage was continual and culture a habit. Yet how devoid of passion, how bereft of joy and color! Not hopeless but unhopeful, if this way did not lead to victory, it defied defeat, as we may read in the challenging lines of Henley:

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced or cried aloud,
Under the bludgeoning of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

But there is another way, if haply we may find it, whereby grim resignation passes into glad Reconciliation, and life is lifted into joy and love and victory. It is the Christian way which receives life, not as a decree of Fate, but as an opportunity, a discipline, a gift from the Father of men "in whose will is our peace." It does not simply endure life, as Epictetus did, because he saw no honorable way to get out of it, holding the fort awaiting a signal for retreat. No; it accepts life with all its ills, its weariness, its woe, as a school wherein to learn a truth that transcends and transfigures it. Such is the way of Jesus, and those who walk in it testify that if it seems hard at first, in fact its yoke is easy, its burden light, and it becomes a singing way further on; even though it lead into a Valley of Shadow. If one were to sum up this better wisdom, it would be to say, Close your Goethe, and open your Browning; that is, learn that God is Love, and that a thread of all-sustaining purpose runs through the often strange medley of things:

The world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

Now, the glad, grateful, heroic reconciliation to which Jesus leads us is much more than the feeble

Joseph Fort Newton

quietism which says that whatever is, is right: which may be only another name for sloth. Much more, indeed. Jesus accepted the dark tragedy of his cross as the loving will of God, but he did not accept it too soon and all at once. No, there was his bitter battle in the Garden of Sorrow, in which his quivering sensibility struggled with his faith, until it became clear that he must either accept the cross or betray his ideal. Once that was plain, he did not hesitate to accept the inevitable, not as mere Fate, but as the holy will of his Father. So it must be with us, albeit no sorrow of ours is for a moment to be put alongside that profound tragedy. God forbid! Yet here is a truth to take to heart, and it is sorely needed. Sin, disease and death exist by the will of God, yet we must not submit and let them have their way, but must resist them to the utmost, and by so doing discover and fulfil his higher will.

Is There a Blind Fate?

Just so, when we look out over the world today we must not lose faith and rail at a blind, brutal Fate,

much as we may be tempted to do so. Truly there is much to dismay us, much to fill us with horror, and we often feel as the writer of the 73rd Psalm did in his day. He saw the sufferings of the innocent, the downfall of the righteous, and the sleek prosperity of the wicked, and he thought about it until his head ached without finding a clue. Indeed, he slipped and well-nigh lost his faith, until he went into the sanctuary. There, in the stillness of the Presence, amid the sound of haunting Amens, he learned that the purpose of God may be something other and greater than he had ever dreamed, much less grasped; and that the injustices which had hurt him and shaken his faith are not outside its sweep, but may, indeed, be necessary to it. At any rate, he was taught of God to trust a truth deeper than his doubt, and his rebel mood was melted into the reconciling wonder of worship.

Nor must we forget the plain word of Jesus, telling us that if we would be reconciled to God, our Father, we must first be reconciled with Man our Brother. If we bring our gift to the altar, and remember that we have ought against a brother man, it is better to leave the gift unoffered—it will keep—and go and make amends, or seek forgiveness, lest we be not forgiven. No one ought ever to use the brief, grand prayer which Jesus taught us to pray, if he has hate, or bitterness, in his heart. For, in that prayer, we actually ask God to make our forgiveness the measure of his own: "Forgive us as we forgive those who have sinned against us." That is, until we act toward man as a brother, God will not—can not—act toward us as a Father. It is not an edict but a law, almost terrifying in its implications, if we know what we mean by the words we use. What wonder that our prayers do not rise to heaven, but fall like lead upon our own souls, bringing no blessing. How can we know the love of God—save as a remote rumor, or a vague theory—if we harbor hate in our hearts? It is spiritually impossible. As Bojer said in one of his great stories: "I went and sowed seed in my enemy's field *that God might exist!*" Because God is love, we know him only by love, for love is both revelation and reconciliation.

Tragedies of Life

One of the most striking of modern stories is "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," by Thornton Wilder; so unique in its plot, so exquisite in its art. A famous bridge falls and five people are lost—why those five and no others? It is the very question which we ask when some one near to us is smitten with some awful ill, filling us with mingled pity and dismay. The old monk who tried to keep books, in the effort to solve the riddle, failed sadly, since no one can keep books for God. Yet, as the writer tells the story of each of those five lives, leading up to and ending in the accident—if it was an accident—we are left with the feeling that some merciful divine motive may have been at work in the tragedy. At least, we know that if we knew all, much would be clearer, and perhaps all would be explained. It is all summed up in one last shining sentence: "There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning." It is a haunting line, telling us what our hearts know to be true, that all God will keep and value when he sorts out the strange medley of our days and years is the love of our lives, with which we anointed our fellowmen; "the only survival, the only meaning."

My friends, "be ye reconciled to God." Remember that his will is wider than we know, wiser than we can dream, and must include many things which we can never hope to fathom on earth. Our task is not to understand the Eternal Will, but to learn what it is in respect to our own lives, and do it. Jesus, by facing the bitter worst, found the best, and if he did not lose faith we have no right to do so. Take counsel of him, trust the spirit which he evokes in your heart, and follow where it leads. Make friends with those who have walked in his way; with St. Paul, who won his victory not without agony and tears, by reason of his pride and his intrepid ambition; with the goodly company of those who, having failings like our own, mastered them by his grace. At last, slowly, the sky will become sunny overhead, and the road plain to your feet, and you will learn, what all the mystics have known, the peace, the power, the incredible joy of the surrendered life. Such is the way of Reconciliation, even the way of Eternal Life.

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay;
Mould me and make me after thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway;
Fill with thy spirit, till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me!

The One and the Many

By Cleland B. McAfee

"But now they are many members but one body."
1 Corinthians 12:20

SOME of the first hearers of that phrase would detect in it the suggestion of a current term in philosophy somewhat like the word "relativity" in our own day. Few of them would have any clear idea of the problem involved, but they knew it was being discussed by the learned, just as most of us know that relativity is discussed in technical circles though we do not know precisely the issue involved. The problem of "the one and the many" is among the oldest in philosophy—how we bind the many into a one without robbing each member of the group of its separateness, how we relate the "many" of experience to the One of reality. Schools

of philosophy have formed about various phases of the problem.

Like every philosophical problem, this one bears on daily experience at many points. Indeed, a thoughtful man, observing any one of us through an entire week, would find us dealing with every real problem proposed or considered by philosophy, for philosophy is merely an effort to take the actual situations of life and discover their meaning and the principles which they involve in a rational world.

How to see "many" as "one"—how to see "one" and yet find it "many"—this is a frequent issue. Paul uses the phrase in two illustrations. He speaks in Ephesians of the one building which is yet made up of many stones; stones which continue to be themselves even though they contribute to a unity which absorbs them. Peter calls them "living stones." Paul speaks in this text of members of a body which continue their identity and yet use that identity to build up a unity larger than any of them. In actual practice some of us incline to accent the "one" and to discount the right of the "many," or else to accent the "many" and discount the "one." The idea of Paul is for a balance that sees the "many" making up the "one."

For Christian believers the issue takes at least three forms.

I

How shall the many Christian experiences become one faith?

The Christian religion meets two criticisms. They appeared one day in two articles which came to my desk. One urged that Christianity could not be universal, the ultimate thing its adherents count it, or there would be fuller agreement about it. Instead, its adherents fall into many camps, all thinking their own way, differing about it until inquirers can find hardly any unity among them. The other critique urged that Christianity is a peril to the human spirit because it precludes independent thinking, reducing its adherents to a slavish uniformity in which all liberty is lost. Such criticisms tend to cancel each other, but the spirit of each is patent. One is enamored of the "many"; the other is eager for the "one." For one, a religion is condemned if it reduces its adherents to unity; for the other, it is condemned if it does not do so. That Christianity may encourage a diversity along with a unity is not observed.

But criticisms of the faith are not so important. The serious fact is that believers themselves fall into two groups. One group are strong for creeds, for definite expressions that draw clear lines within which a believer must be if he is to be reckoned a believer at all. They argue that since Christianity is an historic faith "once for all committed to the saints," we cannot allow men to play ducks and drakes with its teachings and still claim recognition as Christians. Christianity is one thing, perfectly feasible to state and to accept; men may take it or leave it, but they cannot be allowed to make up their own lists of ideas and call them Christian. Christianity dissipates into thin air if there is no abiding unity around which believers gather.

The other group are strong for individual thinking and liberty. They would not sign any creed. They would not agree to any statement without the right to put a purely personal interpretation on it. In religion, they feel, each man is shut up alone with God at the last and has it out with him without submitting to the group tests of anybody. The Christian movement would become a mere lockstep if any man had to follow any other man or accept what any other man says. Independence is the hope of religion.

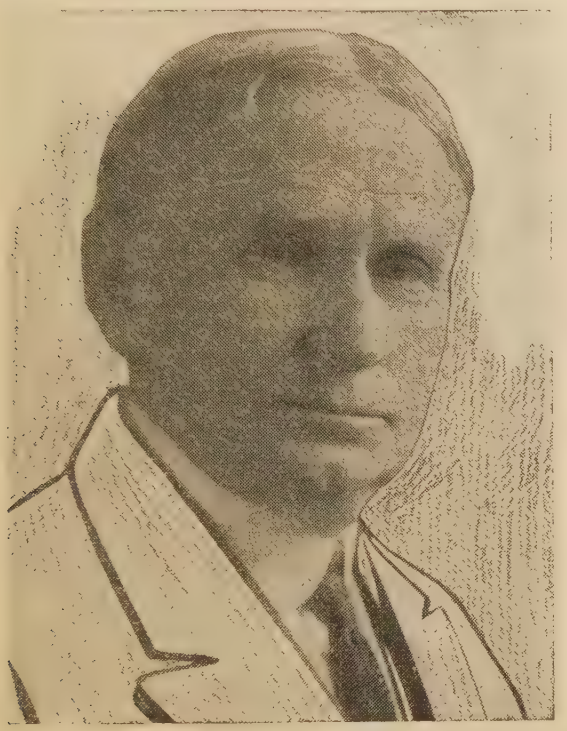
The issue is a living one just now when proposals of church union are so prevalent. Such proposals are often offensive to radicals of both groups. The vigorous "unity" group demand the terms on which bodies mean to unite, the creed to which they will subscribe, the understanding of the Christian faith on which they will agree. These feel that any plan of union which tries to bind unlike bodies together is a mere waste of energy, bringing no strength, creating a farcical unity. Since this basis of unity is so difficult to arrange, they are doubtful of the whole movement. The vigorous "liberty" group fear any terms of unity which might bring them into what they consider the bondage of existing churches whose more adventurous spirits have been under suspicion for differences. They feel that coming into another union may lay them liable to hampering criticism in their efforts to follow the truth as it may lead them.

There is much to be said for both sides. Christ does give his followers liberty of personal action, calling them to make personal surrender to himself alone and to follow him alone at any cost. And yet Christ is building up in the world a brotherhood of men around a common center, a brotherhood in which their minds are involved as truly as any other element of their personality. He does not ask slavish agreement, but it does not follow that he approves feather-minded divergences. Our problem is to see the many expressions of religion making up the one faith.

No Sacrifice of Conviction

The solution of the problem lies in a wide vision of the faith itself which requires no sacrifice of definite conviction. We cannot reduce our Christian faith to a thin mixture of good nature and tolerant feelings, so that we welcome everybody as standing on Christian ground. Some men are not Christians and some opinions are not Christian and some positions are not Christian. Unless we have courage enough to see and to say that, we have given up the Christian religion. On the other hand, it is easy to draw so short a diameter for the Christian circle that we leave a multitude of men and beliefs outside the circle who ought to be inside. It is easy to conceive of Christ in such small terms that he reduces to our phrases instead of overflowing and surpassing them all. If we are to call Christ "the Truth," we are committed to a wide and rich conception of him and his teaching—not the less definite and clear-cut within our limitations but never restricted to our limitations. When we find another man who claims to be a follower of Christ taking positions with which our own seem in conflict, our first impulse is to

count him or ourselves wrong. Perhaps neither is wrong; each may be partial; each may have something to contribute to the other which he needs to complete his total truth. We learned long ago in logic courses that two contradictory things cannot both be true; we must choose between them. But we learned also that two divergent things may both be true, because each may be an aspect of some larger thing in which they find their unity. When earnest Christian men speak, it is certain that each says something the others believe



Cleland B. McAfee

if it were frankly and lovingly taken into presence of "the Truth" himself. We do not understand another Christian until we meet him in the spirit of Christ. We have no right to fight where Christ would not fight. We have no right to condemn where we can find any honest Christian way of welcoming. We can find the many expressions of religion forming one faith if we can see the faith in its wide terms—all issuing from, all contributing to, the center, Christ himself. If he is the center of our belief, if he is all our trust, then he must bring to the human mind a rich wealth which it can never hope to exhaust.

In all this there is nothing supine or indifferent. It is not a cheap "inclusiveness" which is properly offensive to many believers. But there is in it a true and wide inclusion of those who belong within the circle of Christian fellowship. All that we ever say about Christ suggests something larger that may yet be said. Does this man whose expression varies from our own bring out something which we believe but are not stressing as we might? What has he to say to us? Seldom are the assertions of other men wrong; it is their negations. They go wrong when they say, This is true and nothing other than this, nothing beyond this; when they think they have exhausted the truth about "the Truth." Most of the "studies" of Christ say something it is well to hear, but they are generally pitiably defective. You come away from them wondering that a man can say so little about so great a matter. This wonder deepens when you find him closing the argument, pointing out that nothing further than his little word can be said: Christ was just this; having said so much there is no more to be said. The natural impulse is to repudiate all he says, whereas his major affirmations are often greatly needed for an understanding of Christ. But is it not so with all that can be said about so universal a fact as Christianity? Who has said the last word? Where has the diameter of the circle been ended? The center we know, but the circumference—? We do not even know all of the center; he is beyond us even while he is near us. It will take us all, saying all we know, to make up the one description of him.

II

How can the many fields of Christian work become the one world kingdom of Christ?

Most of us are under the spell of geography or of sectionalism. Some are keen on the near-by; some are keener on the distant. In either case we think lightly of the part we do not know and give it slight consideration. Or we are anxious when we hear that believers in another land have taken a different line from the one we know best. We would like to reproduce our own church everywhere, to build up a world-consciousness of Presbyterianism or Methodism or Lutheranism. A newly ordained minister in Guatemala performed his first official act in baptizing a convert. He did it by pouring a large quantity of water on the head of the convert, though the custom of the group where it occurred was sprinkling. When he was asked why he did it so, he replied, "I like it better." Some American believers enjoy this evidence of freedom; others are disturbed by it. But it could be widely duplicated in various forms. The Christian church is not growing around the world in uniform practices. Is it any the less one church? Can we see it as part of the kingdom of God?

But every church has members who specialize in certain areas and have little or no interest in other areas. Most frequently it is the nearest field that holds central place. It is all very well to do missionary work in our own section or even in all parts of America, but what is the use of going to other lands with "our" religion? Why should the rest of the world become like us?

The argument proceeds on the supposition that if we become one we cannot continue to remain many. It overlooks the fact that there can be one kingdom of God formed on earth in which all sections of the world may find a unity which will never become a uniformity. A thoughtful statesman in Siam once said to me that one thing he liked about Christianity is that it does not create a dead uniformity among nations. It creates a type, he thought, but provides for wide variation within the type.

It is that variation within the type which troubles many earnest believers. It has been so from the first. The geographical record in the Acts runs according to the outline in the final charge of our Lord—Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth. Every expansion in the program created disturbance in the minds of earlier adherents. They feared for the unity in the midst of such variety. Sometimes, indeed, the new variations threatened to destroy the unity entirely. It was difficult to think of Asia Minor as becoming Christian without paralleling Jerusalem and Judea more closely. Part of the service of Paul to the early church was his mediating of this variation to the more unifying minds of the older areas.

You have a hint of the same anxiety in the zeal of some Roman Catholic agencies to produce an unbroken church unity without allowing for sufficient divergence in the national types. On the other hand, you find the contrary tendency in the concern of national groups over any suggestion of influence from other lands. The young Chinese had one period, happily closed now for most of them, when anything "western" was taboo just because it was western, lest it might in some way rob them of their independence of thought or action. It was natural, but it issued from a weak sense of the unity which can be developed without loss of variety.

One cannot travel across the United States without discovering this localism that disregards other sections or holds them in suspicion because of their difference from the familiar lines or methods nearer by. Yet the Christian position ought to be perfectly clear. What is happening in America and in the world is that one kingdom of God is being formed, expressing its unity through the many areas and their many lines of life. The unity is endangered by every expression of doubt or suspicion; it is strengthened by every earnest man who sees the many areas as constituting the one kingdom.

III

How can the many lines of Christian work make up the one program of Christ?

Here we are often at our narrowest. We specialize on one line of service; it becomes the synonym for Christianity. The duty of the church is to win souls from the sin and ruin of the world—evangelism is the great task. Anything else fritters away strength and time. But some one else is quite clear that "evangelism" is out of date. What we want is education, religious education, development of young people in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, none of the "whooping-up" of great meetings. Another is sure of the duty of social service; let the church serve all the needs of men; let it stop evils at their source instead of giving itself so fully to dealing with their results. Let it clear the Jericho road of robbers, so that there will be no such need for good Samaritans. Whereupon earnest and devoted adherents are outraged. The church is being called to do what is not its real business, entering realms for which it is not fitted. Why should it meddle with law observance? Why should it pose as having any authority in labor or industrial or economic situations? "The church is being swept away into all sorts of vagaries to the lessening of its real task."

Can anyone miss this divergence? The sorrow of "evangelistic" believers over programs of social service is matched by the half-concealed contempt of "social" believers for any proposals of "another evangelistic campaign." Papers representing the distinctly "redemptive" group pour a certain scorn on "reconstruction" plans, met in turn by the scorn of the reconstruction groups for mere personal evangelism.

This appears in foreign mission fields. It takes extreme form only occasionally, but when it does do so the issue is merely sharpened. One group look with suspicion or downright condemnation on educational or medical or industrial schemes as diverting the program from its central purpose of evangelizing men, winning them personally to Christ. Schools?—yes, if you make them agencies of student evangelism. Hospitals?—by all means, provided they are maintained as soul-winning agencies. But plans for raising the economic level of communities, desirable as they are in themselves, are not the business of missions. That business is clear-cut, distinct—the bringing of as many men, women and children as possible into right relation with God in Christ. Anything that diverts from this is *ultra vires.*

A Large Program Sought

Not at all, say other advocates. All these things are the real business of the church. A college in a mission land is primarily a college; a hospital is for the curing of physical ailments; an experimental farm is for the correction of wrong ways of doing things which limit the ground and rob the grower. Men who give themselves to these forms of work are often as indifferent to purely evangelistic work as their compeers in American institutions, although they are "missionaries."

The way forward lies in gathering up all these ideas into a higher one. The program of Christ of course involves setting men in right relation with God, saving them from their personal sinfulness, leading them to that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. And the program also involves the correction of the life which they live in the actual workaday world, so that they can be salt and light and can change bad conditions which hinder and cripple other lives. Evangelism, education, social service, international influence, law observance, welfare ministry—these are not programs; they are details within one program of Christ for humanity. It is a whole program for a whole life that we are seeking.

St. Paul phrased it for us in a striking sentence when he urged Roman Christians to present their bodies a living sacrifice, adding that this would be their spiritual service. Many of us fail to see that the use of our bodies or the service of other bodies can be turned into a spiritual ministry. Nothing that a man can do for Christ in behalf of other men is outside the essential program of Christ. In that one program are many lines of service. They are bound together about the will of Christ for the good of men, so that they gain a

from sin with the purpose to indulge in it no more. It is an intelligent, deep, painful, determined, final revolt of the whole self against one's own sins.

A Superficial Age

Ours is an age more or less superficial, and it may be that the very depth and pain of the experience of penitence accounts for the neglect of the penitential bench. At any rate the bench is deserted, and *you* are not there. Why are you absent—why? Surely it is not because you do not feel yourself a sinner. No man who knows himself and who is honest with himself can fail to pronounce himself a sinner. Your misdeeds, your shortcomings, your failures, your mistakes, your silences, your indifference, your forgetfulness of God—these massed testimonies must condemn you in your own eyes.

Is your neglect of the bench due to your valuation of your sins as different from the sins of others? of lighter quality, less ugly, less harmful to others? The tendency is to whitewash one's own sins. There is in every man something of the pharisaic undervaluation of his own guilt—"I thank Thee that I am not as other men are; certainly not as bad as this publican." Your sin has in it every element of sin, differing from the sins of others in degree only. Give it time and opportunity and it will show all the ugliness and the hurtfulness of extreme sin. Between your sins and those of others there is no real difference.

Or, evolutionists as many of us are, do you no longer think of sin as rebellion against God, as guilt, as a fall from one's high estate of soul; but as undevelopment, a lower level in the soul's ascent in knowledge and self-control and holiness? Grant that your concept of sin is such. You are aware of your imperfection and in proportion to your nobility you deplore it. You are aware, too, of God's ability and offer to lift you, quickly, now, by his divine grace, far toward the heights, to bring you into real and present sonship with himself. To be thus conscious of one's far-shortness and be content in it; to refuse God's offered grace—his pardon and power to become—this is sin bad enough in itself, sufficient to condemn. The man who is content in his undevelopment and who refuses God's help to come out of it is verily a sinner.

Is Penitence Weak?

Or is the explanation of your absence from the penitents' bench this—that you are not man enough to confess yourself a sinner? This, I think, is the case with most of those who remain away. Repentance is a manly art, requiring the strength of a man. Some seem to look upon the religion of Christ, with its emphasis upon sorrow for sin and self-sacrifice, as a weak and unworthy thing. Like the American woman who writes:

They say Thou reignest from the cross. Thou dost,
And like a tyrant. Thou dost rule by tears,
Thou womanish Son of woman. Cease to thrust
Thy sordid tale of sorrows in my ears,
Jarring the music of my few short years.

But the man who thinks through the nature and the demands of the Christian religion knows that it calls not for weakness but for strength and courage. None but a manly soul, for example, could have made Francis Thompson's bare exposure of his own life:

In the rash lustihood of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap,
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Has puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
. . . . . .
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

It requires courage of an unusual degree to do as Dr. John Stuart Blackie did in the story, retold in a late issue of the British Weekly: How Professor Blackie required of his students that when standing up to construe they should hold their book in the left hand. And how one day a student in standing up to construe held his book in his right hand. And how Blackie protested, saying: "The other hand, please!" or something like that. And how the student read on without appearing to have heard. And how Blackie spoke more sharply. "Do you hear me, sir? The other hand!" And how there was a great silence in the room and some signs of disapproval of the chair. And how the student held up *all the left arm he had,* which was but the stump of an arm! And how John Stuart Blackie, to his eternal credit and winning our forgiveness forever, rushed from his place and knelt down on the floor at that student's feet, and cried: "Can you ever for-

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THE PUBLISHERS.

give me?" It requires a man's strength to confess his sins and beg their forgiveness; and those who have not this strength stay away from the penitents' bench.

Here and now we are in the spiritual temple of God's presence. Wherever God is, there is the temple. In this temple is, all unseen to our eyes, a penitents' bench. God is calling us to come and kneel and confess. Come on. Press forward. Take your place. Bow down. Tell all. Say "Lord, I am sorry!" Then look up. See him bending over you. Look into his face. It is love-lit. Hear him say, "My child, I know all. Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace."

My sins, O the bliss of the glorious thought,
My sins, not in part, but the whole
Are nailed to His cross and I bear them no more!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

LENTEN VERSE

A Ballad of Trees and the Master

INTO the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods He came.

SIDNEY LANIER.

The True Need

I DO not wish to see my sins more plain,
But this: to know Thy life, without a stain.

I would not see the vileness of my heart,
But this would know: how pure and true Thou art.

I would forget my paltry life, so small,
And know Thy greatness, Thou, my All in All.

Oh, teach me not how deep my spirit's night,
But flood me with Thy beams, Thou Perfect Light!

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

In the Garden

MY SINS, my sins, my Savior!
Their guilt I never knew
Till with Thee in the desert
I near Thy passion drew;
Till with Thee in the garden
I heard Thy pleading prayer,
And saw the sweat-drops bloody
That told Thy sorrow there.

J. B. S. MONSELL.

There Is a Man on the Cross

WHENEVER there is silence around me
By day or by night—
I am startled by a cry.
It came down from the cross—
The first time I heard it.
I went out and searched—
And found a man in the throes of crucifixion,
And I said, "I will take you down,"
And I tried to take the nails out of his feet.
But he said: "Let them be,
For I cannot be taken down
Until every man, every woman, and every child
Come together to take me down."
And I said, "But I cannot hear you cry.
What can I do?"
And he said, "Go about the world—
Tell everyone that you meet—
There is a man on the cross."

ELIZABETH CHENEY.

Immunity

THINK you to escape
What mortal man can never be without?
What saint upon earth has ever lived apart from cross and care?
Why, even Jesus Christ, our Lord, was not even for one hour free from His passion's pain.
Christ says, "He needs must suffer,
Rising from the dead,
And enter thus upon his glory."
And how do you ask for another road
Than this—the Royal Pathway of the Holy Cross?

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

L'Envoi

O LOVE triumphant over guilt and sin,
My soul is soiled, but Thou shalt enter in;
My feet must stumble if I walk alone,
Lonely my heart, till beating by thine own;
My will is weakness till it rest in Thine,
Cut off, I wither, thirsting for the Vine;
My deeds are dry leaves on a sapless tree,
My life is lifeless till it live in Thee!

FREDERICK L. KNOWLES.

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

FOR ten years the pastors of the state of Ohio have been holding an annual conference at Columbus, their capital city, to consider the tasks of the church from an interdenominational point of view. Steadily the event has gathered to itself increasing importance until the idea has spread to other states—Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Kansas and yet others—where similar foregatherings of pastors are being held. When more than fifteen hundred pastors will leave their parishes in midwinter and journey at their own expense to Columbus to discuss together the common business of the Christian church, it goes without saying that the movement has vitality in it. These men had no auxiliary motives such as inhere in a gathering of one's own denomination to draw them together. There were no appointments to be made, no bishops or secretaries to elect, no ecclesiastical machinery to operate, no organizational politics to steer. They met together because they have come to feel the need of one another in the common enterprises of the kingdom of God. In addition, it must be admitted that they were drawn by an irresistible program. It is doubtful if a more commanding program has been presented in many a day than that which Rev. B. F. Lamb, the genius behind the whole event, offered to the Ohio pastors. We hear a good deal about the community church these days, and we are going to hear more. But the principle involved in taking religion as a community affair, rather than a denominational affair, must be extended beyond the local community to larger units, of which our states themselves are next in order.

The Book of the Month

POEMS OF JUSTICE, *an anthology of the social awakening, compiled by Thomas Curtis Clark. Willett, Clark and Colby, Chicago and New York,* $2.50.

HERE is a marvelously fascinating book. It has set fire to my imagination. It preaches the gospel of social justice as no sermon could ever hope to preach it. It will create sermons in the soul of every preacher who possesses it. And it will lift many a sermon from mediocrity by giving it just the right verses to adorn the theme and to give wings to the thesis. Mr. Clark has collected here some 350 poems expressive of the yearning of humanity for a society in which the poor, the oppressed and the underprivileged may come into their human right. The book might have chosen as its text the same text which Jesus used in his synagogue sermon in Nazareth: "He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor . . . . to proclaim release to the captives." Mr. Clark has ranged through the entire literature of English poetry and gathered for this volume significent verse which interprets the rising tide of social passion from Plato to Greenwich Village. His groupings are under four headings. Each is an inspiration in itself. First is a section which he calls "The Panorama of the Poor"—poems descriptive of the tragic lot of the oppressed. Then comes "The March of Revolt"—depicting the growing demand for justice on the part of and in behalf of the poor. This is followed by a section entitled "Brothers All," in which the poets sing the truth of our common blood despite our social distinctions. And finally, the great hope for a new world of justice finds voice in a section called "Dreams and Goals." This book will feed and fire any preacher's heart when the flame burns low.

A Thought for the Month

THE UNIQUE QUALITY of our Christian faith is disclosed at no point more vividly than in the persistent interest of Christian people in exploring and living over again and again the inner life of Jesus, their Master. I know of nothing like it in any other religion. In other faiths the teachings of the founders are studied with great devotion, but in Christianity alone not only are the teachings of the Founder an object of study but the Teacher himself is the supreme object of devotion. I do not refer to the old but ever new problem of explaining the person of Jesus in terms which satisfy our intelligence. That, too, lends uniqueness to Christianity as compared with other faiths. But it is the insatiable desire which his presence quickens in our hearts for something that we call fellowship with him that, after all, is Christianity's chief distinction. Paul called it a fellowship with Christ's sufferings. He completely identified the soul of the Christian with the living spirit of Jesus. The mind that was in Jesus was to be the mind of the follower of Jesus. The identification was so complete, as Paul thought, that Christ really lived in him and for him to live was Christ. This conception is priceless. Alas, if any of us have allowed the sophistication of our age to rob us of it! The Lenten season is consecrated to the rediscovery of our Master's own most real experience and the identification of ourselves with him in the events of his life and the ascent to his cross. Not all ministers and churches are accustomed to observe the Lenten season, but it is a growing custom in many places where once it was quite ignored. Wherever the recurring season can be used to increase our knowledge of the incarnate life of God in Jesus and to deepen our desire to share that very life of his in our lives, it is, I think, a mistake not to utilize it.

Charles Clayton Morrison

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